



News Release

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**NATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE OUTLINES VISION, PLANS FOR 2002
IN REPORT TO CONGRESS**

WASHINGTON -- In her first report to Congress, National Taxpayer Advocate Nina E. Olson outlined her vision for the Taxpayer Advocate Service (TAS) during the upcoming year.

In the June 30 report, which is required by law, Olson highlighted her plans for fiscal year 2002. She focused on activities that assist taxpayers resolve problems including current and future plans for case processing, systemic advocacy, staffing and training, toll free access to taxpayer advocate caseworkers, internal and external outreach and Citizen Advocacy Panels (CAPs).

Olson also identified several themes that the TAS will begin to explore under her direction.

"The themes speak to the fundamental mission of advocacy on behalf of taxpayers and bridge all of the Taxpayer Advocate Service's operations," Olson said.

The themes address the following questions:

- What does it mean to be a taxpayer advocate within the Internal Revenue Service?
- What is the extent of the National Taxpayer Advocate's (and her delegates') authority to resolve taxpayer problems?
- What is the appropriate ratio of cases that are caused by hardship to those that are caused by processing delays?
- What standards of practice should Taxpayer Advocate Service employees be held to?
- What is the appropriate measure of the Taxpayer Advocate Service's performance and success?

Olson anticipates that the TAS will explore these questions through numerous avenues including presentations and discussions with members of Congress and their staffs, and with taxpayers, practitioners, and other professionals. The answers obtained will assist the TAS in developing a definition of advocacy, a code of practice for its employees and an understanding of its underlying, or core, values.

(more)

The report was delivered to Congress last week. To review the report in its entirety, visit the IRS web site at www.irs.gov/ind_info/tas02obj.pdf.

The TAS helps individuals solve ongoing tax problems with the IRS and recommends changes to prevent problems from happening in the future.

You may qualify for the assistance of a taxpayer advocate if:

- You are facing a significant hardship due to an action taken by the IRS.
- You are on the second attempt to resolve a problem after going through all normal IRS channels.
- You have not been contacted by the date promised or have experienced a delay of more than 30 days past normal processing time to resolve an issue.

Call 1-877-777-4778 (toll-free) to request the assistance of a taxpayer advocate.

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